



# NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

A Research Center for Turf and Field Sports, their History and Social Significance

Middleburg, Virginia 22117  
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Judith Ozment, Librarian

December 1991  
No. 33

## Classics of Equine Veterinary Medicine

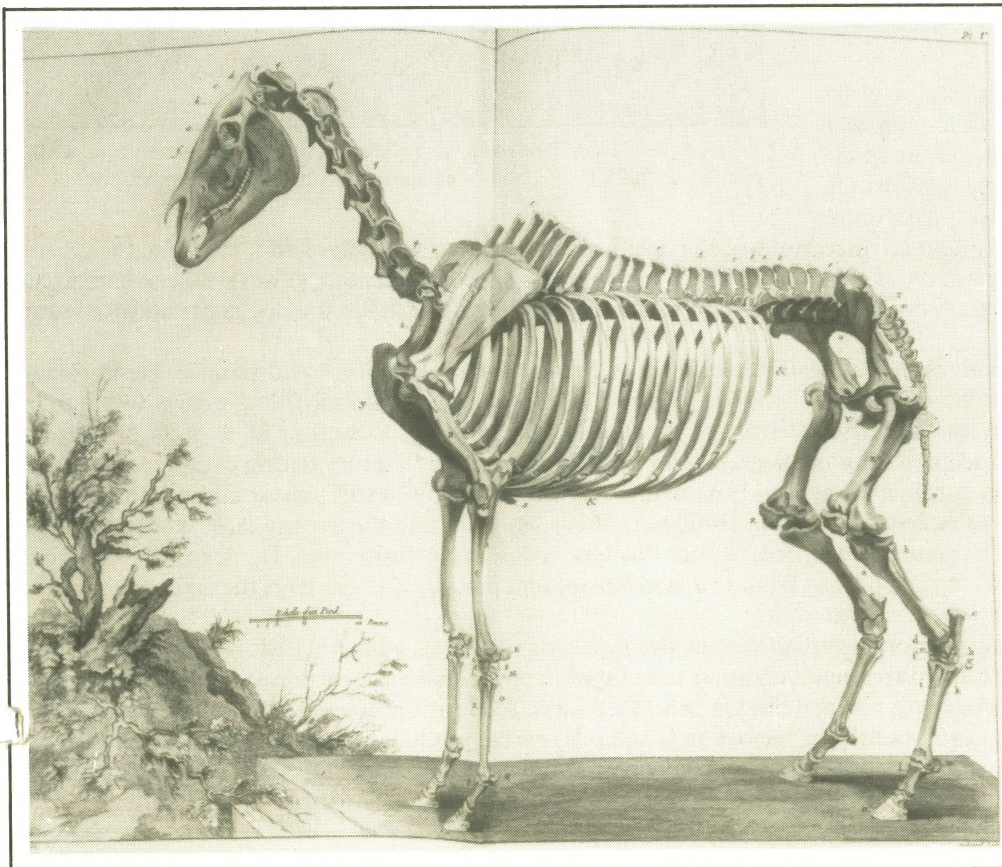
Ellen B. Wells

Throughout history, the horse has served man in peace and in war, and equine health has always been an issue of concern for horse owners. Texts on maintaining the health of the horse have been written since the time of the Hittites, about the third millennium B.C.; some of these editions have survived from antiquity. Manuals on horse care appeared soon after the invention of the printing press. Owners, stable masters, and breeders continuously revised texts that were printed editions of medieval manuscripts. Publication in the vernacular increased by the sixteenth century, so more original works on the horse

appeared and eventually superseded the equine incunabula.

Perhaps the first printed work focusing on horses was *Scriptores rei rusticae*, published in Venice in 1472, which was edited from texts of Cato, Varro, Columella, and Palladius. However, the orientation was more agricultural than veterinary. In 1490, Lorenzo Rusio published *Liber marescalciae equorum* in Speier. This was followed quickly by several other books on horses, including a publication of the thirteenth-century text of Giordano Ruffo, *Arte di conoscere la natura dei cavalli*, in Venice in 1493, possibly the first veterinary work published in the vernacular.

*continued*



A double page plate from Lafosse's 1772 *Cours d'Hippiatrique ou Traite de la Medecine des Chevaux*, which is considered the "classic" of equine veterinary medicine.



Additional texts were published in the early sixteenth century, and classical texts were republished, such as Flavius Vegetius Renatus' *Artis veterinariae, sive Mulomedicinae libri quatuor* in Basel in 1524. Vegetius' work was based on Apsyrtos, an even earlier source. But it was the middle and later sixteenth century which saw the birth of original contributions to equine veterinary literature. We now include these works as classics of the literature, although there is little evidence that their contributions were read or appreciated in their day. It was not, in fact, until the late eighteenth century that the horsemen who wrote manuals of stable care read any of the scientific literature on the horse.

There are many claimants for the honor of describing the circulation of blood in the horse, including two writers of veterinary works: Francisco de la Reyna (or Reina) and Carlo Ruini, both of the sixteenth century. Both authors gave partially new descriptions of the movement of the blood, but neither really clarified the matter as did William Harvey early in the seventeenth century.

De la Reyna first published his small work on horse care, *Libro de albeyteria*, in Spain in 1547. At least six editions were printed, the last in 1647. According to science historian Ronald Sterne Wilkinson:

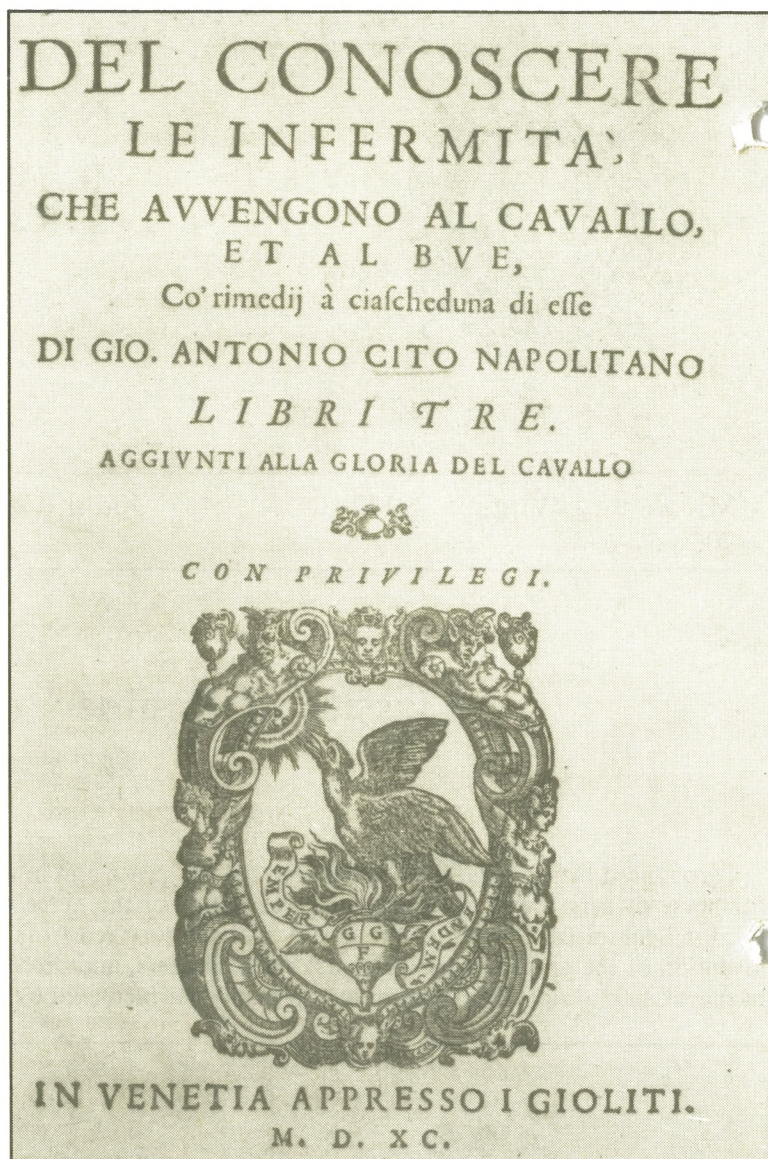
*Reyna's theory might be considered an attempt to reconcile observation (upward or centripetal flow of blood in equine leg veins) with Galenism (downward or centrifugal flow) by postulating both . . . Despite the difficulties involved, it cannot be doubted that Reyna was among those before Harvey who saw that somehow there was more to the movements of the blood than Galen had taught.*

Carlo Ruini, a Bolognese lawyer, did not refer to Reyna, nor to other predecessors in his *Dell'anatomia e dell'infermita del cavallo*, first published in 1598. This edition was noteworthy for three reasons: it represented a return to the animal itself to determine its anatomy (Ruini himself dissected or attended dissections of horses); it was illustrated superbly; and it contained what some scholars have suggested is a vague description of the pulmonary circulation. The second part of the work described common problems of horses, and gave traditional cures. Ruini anatomized the hoof, but did not describe shoeing methods or trimming techniques.

Two encyclopedists included long sections on horses in their works: Conrad Gesner and Ulisse Aldrovandi. Gesner's large folio format, *Historia animalium* (Zurich, 1551-1558), treated the horse in encyclopedic fashion, filling nearly two hundred pages. He discussed the natural history of the horse (as little as was known at the time), as well as all aspects of breeding, raising, and veterinary treatment. He included long passages on the horse in history and culture (citing every predecessor he could find) and much on what was then considered medical treatment. Aldrovandi followed suit almost a hundred years later with his *De quadrupedibus solidipedibus volumen integrum* (Bologna, 1639). By this time the accumulated knowledge filled almost three hundred pages, with more references to predecessors but less veterinary information. However, the veterinary materials that were included begin with long quotations from Lorenzo Rusio, and purging and cautery, therapeutic techniques applied equally to man and beast, were discussed as well.

Perhaps the last generalist who left a memorable treatment of the horse was Buffon, whose stylish words, together with Gesner's as translated by Toppell, were quoted frequently in horse manuals and encyclopedias well into the nineteenth century.

Stable management manuals of the sixteenth century always contained large sections on diseases of the horse and how to cure them. The cures were based on medieval traditional recipes and methods, herbal poultices, cautery, bleeding, and surgery. Charts showing a horse with lines drawn to the edge of the image were used for an overview. Diseases or injuries for each part were identified in a few words on the edge of the picture, sometimes with page numbers for the appropriate text added



Title page of *Del Conoscere Le Infermita*, by Giovanni Antonio Cito, printed in 1590 is the NSL's earliest text on veterinary medicine.



to form a visual index to therapy. The earliest such illustration may be that published in Charles Etienne's *L'Agriculture et Maison Rustique* (Paris, 1574). These disease charts continued to be published until the eighteenth century.

The work of the well-traveled French horseman Jacques Solleysel, sieur du Clapier, represents a watershed in the professionalism of horse care. In his very popular and well-written *Le Parfait Mareschal* (Paris, 1664) Solleysel critically anthologized previous knowledge, weeding out much of the harmful treatment of the ill or injured horse. He added new material on stable management and information on breeds of horses. Although worthless information was still included, the long task of reviewing and revising accepted fact was begun. *Le Parfait Mareschal* ran into at least forty printings, and was translated into English as *The Perfect Horseman* by Sir William Hope in 1696. It was still available as late as 1782.

George Simon Winter's *Tractatio nova et auctior de re equaria* first appeared in Nuremberg in 1672. New editions and printings were put out until at least 1840, when an edition was published in Philadelphia for German-speaking immigrants, that included very crude woodcuts and what appeared to be original recipes or prescriptions.

One of the outstanding scientists of his time, Giovanni Afonso Borelli, considered horses in his *De motu animalium* (Rome, 1680, two volumes). Perhaps, as a former Neapolitan, he was more familiar with horses than many scientists. Naples had been a center of equestrian training in the sixteenth century, and was still one of the preferred places from which trainers were recruited to the great noble stables of southern Europe. Borelli's studies of animal movement showed that he had observed horses very closely and attempted to account for and describe gaits.

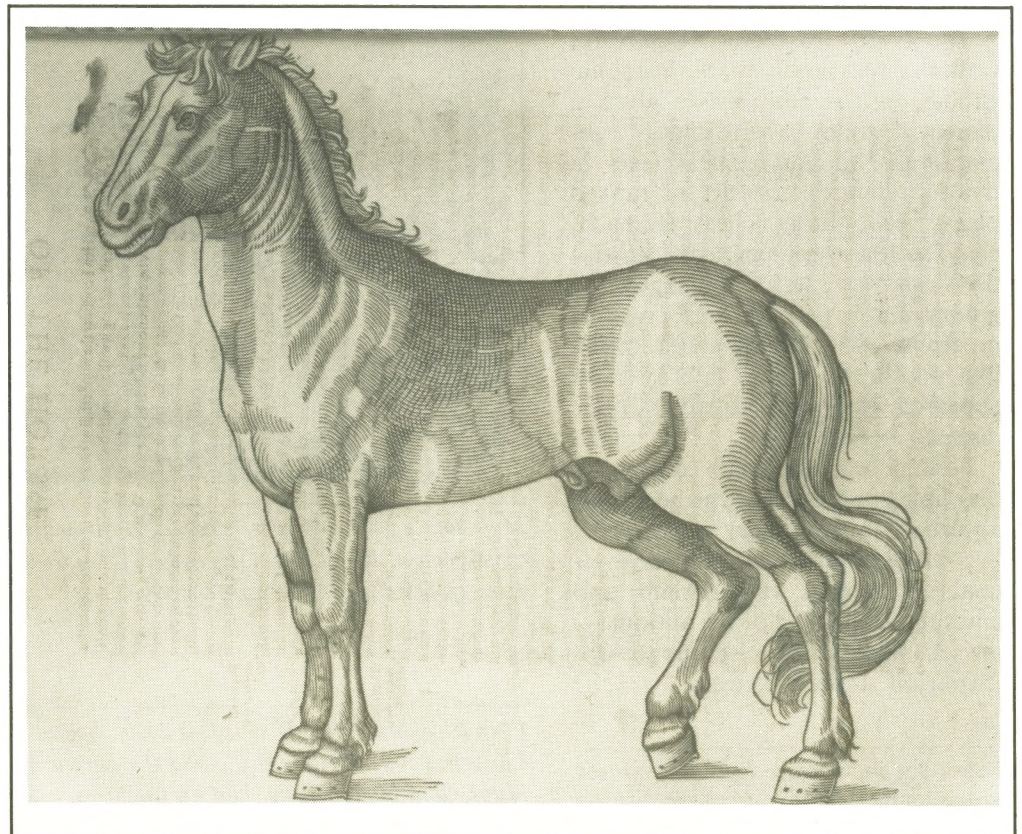
George Stubbs was neither a horseman nor a veterinarian, but he was among the few since Carlo Ruini and before the founding of veterinary schools known to dissect horses, albeit for his own purposes as an artist. He did have experience and contact with the medical world, illustrating a work on midwifery (John Burton's *Essay Towards a Complete New System of Midwifery*, London, 1751), and at the end of his life embarking on a project to illustrate comparative anatomy. In 1766, Stubbs published *The Anatomy of the Horse*, a series of eighteen engraved plates showing the muscles and skeleton of the horse. In the field of "artistic" anatomy, Ruini had at last been surpassed.

The practice of dissection of the horse for veterinary research purposes seems to have been revived late in the eighteenth century. With the founding of the French veterinary schools, the first at Lyon in 1762 and the second at Alfort in 1764, dissection on a systematic and ongoing basis was established. Other schools followed soon after, and although anatomical knowledge increased rapidly and began to be disseminated much more broadly than ever before, treatment of horses did not really begin to improve until late in the nineteenth century.

Perhaps the last "classic" of equine veterinary medicine in the grand format is the superb atlas of Philippe-Etienne Lafosse, his *Cours d'Hippiatrique ou Traite de la Medecine des Chevaux* (Paris, 1772). The illustrations follow the tradition of Vesalius and Ruini, showing the dissection of the whole horse, proceeding from external structures down to the skeleton in stages. Some critics of this work have suggested that the large plates showing the equine cadaver hanging from hooks at the various stages of dissection give the appearance of a slaughterhouse. The colored copies of the work seem to enhance the impression,

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"The Horse" from Topsell's *Historie of Four-Footed Beasts*, published 1607, contains 94 pages on treatment of horses' injuries and illnesses.





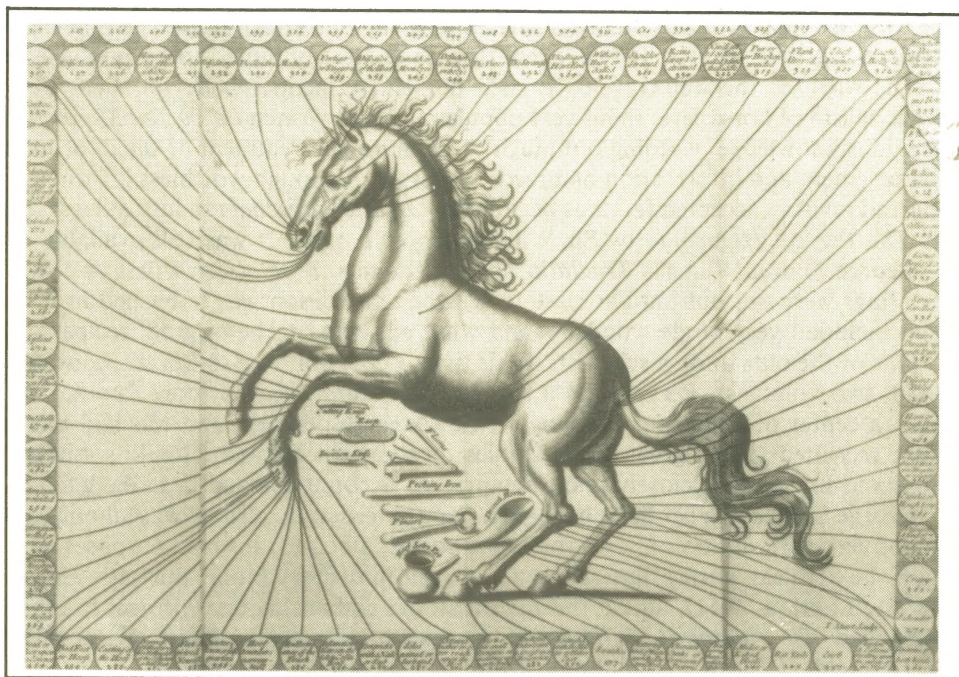
but there was probably not much difference between an abbatoir and a large animal dissection room at that time. In fact, the *Cours* is one of the most beautifully designed horse books of any period, graced with fine paper, typography, design elements, and superb illustrations summarizing the internal and external anatomical knowledge of the era.

The horse served as a subject for medical, physiological, and anatomical work throughout the nineteenth century, but application of knowledge learned from human medicine was only slowly applied to the horse in daily life. The work of Mayhew epitomizes the practice of equine veterinary medicine in Victorian times. Edward Mayhew, brother of the famous Henry Mayhew, author of the humane and social classic *London Labour and the London Poor*, was a writer for the London newspaper *Morning Post* and also wrote several books on care of the horse. *The Illustrated Horse Doctor* (London, 1860) and *The Illustrated Horse Management* (London, 1864) were popular and were reprinted several times. In both works, Mayhew was among those who emphasized the economic value of humane treatment of horses, which must have been familiar to Anna Sewall when she wrote *Black Beauty* early in the 1870s.

*The Illustrated Horse Doctor* was dedicated to a physician, Sir Benjamin Brodie, by the author as a grateful patient. It follows the format of contemporary human medical texts in treating diseases in order of ranked parts: head, throat, chest, stomach, etc. The fine wood-engraved illustrations showed stable managers or grooms how to perform simple surgical procedures, what the apparatus looked like, and how a sick or injured horse appeared when afflicted with various diseases and injuries.

From the late nineteenth century on, the clinical literature of the horse was absorbed in veterinary periodicals, becoming the strict purview of qualified trained veterinarians and marking the passing of the antiquary, the self-taught anatomist, and the do-it-yourself stable manager. □

**Notes:** The above article reprinted courtesy of the journal *Medical Heritage*, Sharon Romm, M.D., editor.



Solleysel's *Le Parfait Mareschal* was translated by Sir William Hope in 1696 and printed under the title *The Perfect Horseman*. The NSL 1702 edition contains a chart showing sites of injuries and illnesses.



Markham's *Maister-Peece*, 1651, is illustrated with a foldout showing the "anatomy of a most perfect horse, with lines drawn from every member, showing all the outward diseases belonging to a horse's body."

*Ellen B. Wells, a NSL Director, is Chief, Special Collections Branch, Smithsonian Institution Libraries, Washington, D.C., and the author of many articles and books on the horse, its history and bibliography, and on the history of medical illustration.*



# Alicia Thornton, 19th Century Jockey

Judith Ozment

Turf lore credits England's Alicia Thornton as being the first woman to wear racing silks. The wife of Colonel Thomas Thornton, one of the early 19th century's most notorious gambler-sportsmen, her racing career began as the result of her renown as an equestrian and Col. Thornton's ever readiness to arrange a bet. This led to the historical "Vingarillo-Thornville match."

The match came about as the result of a dash around the Colonel's country estate, Thornville Park, when Mrs. Thornton easily beat a neighbor, Captain Flint. The Captain was greatly chagrined at being beaten by a woman and issued a challenge for a return match.

The Colonel, confident of his wife's ability, accepted a bet of 500 guineas and a stake of 1,000 guineas; it was decided the event should come off at the 1804 York August meeting at the Knavesmire course. They were to ride four miles, with no allowance made for their weight difference.

The novelty of the match caused expectation to be raised to a high pitch. It was reported that 100,000 spectators "at least" attended the race. The Sixth Light Dragoons, mounted and uniformed, was called out to patrol the grounds controlling the crowd.

According to *The Annals of Sporting and Fancy Gazette*, London 1823, Mrs. Thornton appeared for the race dressed in "leopard colored jacket, blue sleeves, and blue cap." Mr. Flint rode in white silks.

The account of the race from the *Annals*—"Mrs. Thornton, riding Vingarillo, kept the lead in grand style for upwards of three miles, when Mr. Flint, on Thornville, pushed forward and passed her. The lady after using every exertion pulled up about two lengths from home (some reports saying that her girth had loosened and saddle slipped). Time was 9 minutes 59 seconds; betting during the first three miles was 7 to 4 and last mile 2 to 1 in Mrs. Thornton's favor."

Not at all dispirited by defeat, Mrs. Thornton publicly challenged Mr. Flint to the same match the coming year, his horse, Thornville, against any one of three that she might name, he selecting which one, and she would hunt that horse through the season. To the consternation of racing fans, Mr. Flint refused the challenge.

Mrs. Thornton continued racing, winning a number of races. Colonel Thornton continued placing bets, winning from Mr. Bromford in August 1805 "four hogsheads of sherry, 2000 guineas half forfeit and 600 guineas bet." The same day she also won a cup valued at 700 guineas.

A match was made for Mrs. Thornton to ride two miles against Frank Buckle, a noted jockey. Buckle rode Allegro, by Pegasus, who carried 13st 6 lbs; Mrs. Thornton rode



Lady Thornton shown riding side-saddle in her famous race.

Louisa, by Pegasus, who carried 9st 6 lbs. For the race, she was described as wearing "a purple cap and waistcoat, long nankeen skirt, purple shoes and embroidered stockings."

The *Annals* reports—"Mrs. Thornton maintained the lead for some time. Buckle then passed her, which he kept for only a few lengths, when Mrs. Thornton with the greatest skill and judgement, pushed forward and won by half a neck. The assembled thousands hailed her successful struggle with the most enthusiastic shouts of applause and congratulation."

A humorous verse, author unknown, was prompted by the occasion.

*"The beau-monde will condemn what I write, beyond doubt  
And some simpering young misses will giggle and pout;  
But the odds that I bet shall be twenty to one,  
That such an exploit ne'er by woman was done."*

## Alexander Mackay-Smith Named Curator and Peter Winants Chairman of the Board

Alexander Mackay-Smith, one of the original founders of the National Sporting Library, will serve as NSL Curator, while Peter Winants, recently retired as President of *The Chronicle of the Horse*, will act as Chairman of the Board.

Plans are underway to enable the library to expand its collections and patron services. You will be apprised of these exciting developments as your support is vital for the continued life of the NSL.

## NSL Personnel Changes

Judith Ozment, NSL head librarian for twelve years, will be traveling extensively for several months. The library will be in the good hands of June Ruhsam, avid foxhunter and a previous NSL head librarian, and Laura Rose, a former *Chronicle* intern and a sporting art enthusiast.



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AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE	PRICE	NOTES
1. AFC	Training...Handling...Hounds..Field	1971-79	2.00	booklets, bound
2. Agr.Hist.Ctr.	List of References..History..Ag.	1971	2.00	..1865-1900, pb, folio
3. AHS	AHS Rule Book	1940-73	5.00	8 vol: 40-82
4. Aldin	Hunting Scenes	1936	75.00	folio, plts, vg, faded cvrs
5. Allen	Sporting Incidents	1893	250.00	lg.folio; 4 parts; 16 color plts; \$10/100
6. Amer. Race Horses	American Race Horses	assorted	15.00 ea.	
7. Amer. Race Horses	American Racing Manual	assorted	20.00 ea.	
8. Ansell	Riding High	1974	2.00	dj
9.	Show jumping	1951	1.00	
10. Arab Horse Club	Arabian Stud Book	1918	25.00	vg, giltedge, insc. "Blunt ..from..Brown"
11. Arabian HS	Arabian Stud Book	1918	25.00	illus, vg
12. Babcock	Illustrated Hunting Diary	1936	5.00	dj, illus, vg
13. Back	Sucker's Teeth	1965	2.00	dj, illus, vg
14. Baily	Baily's Hunting Directory	1954&84	5.00	2 vol.
15. Ball	Hounds Will Meet	1931	25.00	illus/Edwards, plts, vg, faded spine
16. Barker	Young entry	1939	3.00	dj, illus
17. Barrette	Countryman's journal	1981	1.00	Maine coast & farmlife
18. Bayliss	Bollivar	1937	50.00	Derrydale; #93/950; vg
19. BB	Wild Lone	1938	10.00	illus, vg, sl torn cvrs
20. Beagle (NBC)	annual report	1982-3, 83-4	2.00	(2)
21. Beagling	Lets go!		2.00	
22. Beaufort	Hunting	1894	2.00	Bad Libr, hlf lea, illus, vg, worn cvrs
23. Beckford	Thoughts on Hunting	1930	10.00	illus, vg, sl torn cvrs
24. Bell	Huntsman's Log Book	1947	4.00	illus, vg

AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE	PRICE	NOTES
25. Blagg	History..North Staffordshire Hounds	1902	5.00	illus, ports, maps, gd, torn cvrs/spine
26. Br. Racehouse	Br. Racehorse	1978	2.00	Summer & fall
27. Bradley	Fox-Hunting from Shire..Shire	1912	20.00	plts, teg, gilt cvrs, vg, faded spine
28. Brock	Point-to-Point Racing	1950	8.00	dj, illus, vg, dj torn
29.	To Hunt the Fox	1937	7.00	illus, vg
30. Brooke	Foxhunter's England	1937	8.00	illus, near vg
31.	Horse lovers	1927	2.00	
32.	Training to jump	1913	2.00	
33. Brown	Horse Brasses	1949	3.00	dj, illus, vg, torn dj
34. Bryden	Hare-Hunting and Harriers	1903	10.00	illus, gd, teg, torn spine
35. Bryn Mawr	Hound show	1987&89	1.00	(2)
36. Buchanan-Jardine	Hounds of the World	1979	20.00	1/600, dj, col plts, illus
37. Buck	Horses in training	1903-1942	10.00	17 vol.; misc yrs
38. Budgett	Hunting by Scent	1933	10.00	plts/Edwards, vg, faded cvrs
39. Carlisle	Belvidere hounds	1935	50.00	Derrydale: 1/1250
40. Chamberlin	Training Hunters, Jumpers..Hacks	1952	10.00	illus, vg, faded spine
41. Champlin	Chronicle of the Coach	1886	10.00	illus, dec cvrs, vg
42. Chapple	Your Horse	1990	2.00	pb, illus, vg
43. Chronicle	horses	1987	2.00	Horse in sport
44. Colville	Beagling and Otter-Hunting	1940	4.00	fox, illus, vg, faded spine
45. Conday	Horse Sense	1979	2.00	dj, illus, vg
46. Conyers	Sport..reminiscences	1920	2.00	
47. Cook	Observations on Fox-Hunting	1922	5.00	col plts, vg, fox, faded spine
48.	Observations on Fox-Hunting	1922	5.00	col plts, vg
49. Courcy-Parry (Dalesman)	Here Lies My Story	1966	2.00	illus, vg
50. Crascedo	Hunting Lore	1928	4.00	illus, plts, gd, torn spine
51. Crowe	Sport..Find It	1953	10.00	illus/Brown, #115/1475
52. Crowell	Cav..Am..Horses	1951	2.00	prev. owner's stamp
53. Cummins	Dr. E. Somerville	1952	2.00	ports, vg, faded spine
54. Currier & Ives	Trotting	1984	50.00	dj, col plts, mint
55. d'Endrody	Give..horse..chance	1959	2.00	1st; dj
56. Dale	Eighth Duke of Beaufort	1901	5.00	fox, illus, ports, gd
57. Daniel	Rural Sports	1802	225.00	65 engrav; 3 vol
58. Darvill	Treatise..	1840	35.00	..Eng. race horse; Vol II
59. Daumas	Die Pferde der Sahara	1976	2.00	dj, Ger text, vg
60. Davidson	event. champ.	1980	2.00	bio; like new
61. Denlinger	Beagle..	1956	4.00	..the complete
62. Devereux	Ride pony right	1974	2.00	dj
63. diary	Hunting diary	nd	5.00	hf lea; blank pgs
64. Dinsmore	..equine friends	1944	2.00	Our..
65. Douglas	Forty Thousand Quotations	1917	2.00	teg, vg, worn cvr/spine
66. Duran	diary	1989	2.00	illus/auth, blank pgs..
67. Edwards	Training Aids	1990	2.00	stable/show rec
68.	Wiles of the Fox	1932	20.00	prt cvrs, illus, vg
				col plts/Edwards, illus, vg, spot/cvr



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69. Emerson	..harness racing	1951	2.00	A fan's guide to..
70. Enslinger	Horses and Tack	1977	4.00	dj, illus, vg
71. Fielding	Fielding's Dictionary	1965	6.00	Am. painters, sculptors
72. Fleitmann	Comments on Hacks and Hunters	1921	6.00	plts, vg
73.	Hoofs in the Distance	1953	20.00	#316/985, sign/auth, sc, illus, vg, faded spine
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75. Foote	Dumb-Bell of Brookfield	1921	2.00	gd
76.	Hoofbeats	1950	2.00	great horse stories
77.	Song of the Dragon	1923	2.00	gd
78. Forester	Compl. Man..Young Sportsmen	1859	40.00	illus, vg, faded spine
79. Frederick	Foxhunting	1930	5.00	dj, illus, col plts, vg, torn dj
80. French-Blake	World of show jumping	1967	2.00	dj
81. Gambado	Academy..Grown Horsemen	1929	12.00	G. Ross/illus, #461 reg edit.
82. Gilbey	Farm Stock 100 Years Ago	1910	20.00	plts, vg, worn cvrs
83.	Hounds in Old Days	1913	25.00	plts, vg
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85. Goodwin's	Turf guide	1883	5.00	
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87. Grand	Horse for Christmas Morning	1939	20.00	pb, vg, stain cvrs
88.	Horse for Christmas Morning	1939	25.00	dj, vg, pb
89.	Mr. Henry..Throckmorton	1948	20.00	pb, sign/auth, illus, stain cvrs
90.	Silver horn	1934	15.00	Country Life large edit.
91.	Stewart, Redmond	1938	15.00	bio/foxhunter & gentleman
92. Grant	Qtr Century..Arapahoe Hunt	1954	2.00	map, vg
93. Gray	Gallops, 3 vol. set	1929	150.00	Derrydale, teg, illus/Brown, #306/750, vg
94. Green	Stable Management Explained	1990	2.00	pb, illus, mint
95.	Tack Explained	1990	2.00	pb, illus, fine
96. Griffiths	Dancing Horses	1982	2.00	Spain, bullfights, fic, vg
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98.	Memoirs..Diana Grisdale	1932	4.00	sign/auth, vg
99.	Stolen Kisses	1914	2.00	sign/auth, plts, lea, worn cvrs
100. Hagers-town	Hagers-town Almanac	1876	7.00	paper, poor
101. Harewood	Flat racing	nd	8.00	49 plts: Lons. lib, dj
102. Hatch	Full Tilt	1938	75.00	Derrydale, #468/950, plts, vg, stain cvrs
103. Hayes	Stable mgt..	1947	2.00	..& exercise; dj
104. Henry	Foxhunting is Different	1938	100.00	Derrydale, #272/950, illus/Brown, vg, stain
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108.	Foxhunting	1948	5.00	illus, plts, ports, vg, dj (torn)

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110.	Hunting in US & Can.	1928	75.00	signed; #43/450; sl case
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112.	Old sportsman's memories	1951	10.00	autobiography
113.	Peter Beckford	1937	4.00	plts, ports, vg
114.	Try Back	1931	7.00	illus, ports, vg, faded cvrs
115.	Try Back	1931	10.00	1st edit, teg, plts, ports, vg
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117. Hitchcock	To horse	1948	2.00	dj; on training
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152. Mackay-Smith	Am. Foxhound	1968	250.00	class. subject



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189. Peters	Just hunting	1936	2.00	Babcock illus
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